

United Nations

Daily Highlights

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W E D N E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- ◆ United Nations would set up "biggest and most complex" operation in its history under Paris Accords on Cambodia, Secretary-General states.
- ◆ Security Council holds informal consultations to hear report by Chairman of Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament.
- ◆ In United Nations Day message, to be celebrated tomorrow, Secretary-General calls for recently gained freedoms to be devoted to human welfare goals; in a separate message, Assembly President Samir S. Shihabi says Organization must be strengthened to respond to world's increasing demands.
- ◆ Under-Secretary-General for Public Information tells Special Political Committee of increasing world-wide demand for DPI products and services due to new climate of cooperation in international affairs.
- ◆ Speakers in Legal Committee state that recent Gulf conflict demonstrate need for comprehensive legal regime to protect environment in wartime.
- ◆ General Assembly calls for strengthened action to protect cultural property.
- ◆ Algeria to contribute \$10 million to help implement referendum in Western Sahara.

"The texts submitted to our Conference assign the United Nations a major, and, in certain respects, unprecedented role. If, as expected, the Security Council confirms the Paris Accords, the Organization will be responsible for ensuring their implementation by setting up in Cambodia an operation that will probably be the biggest and most complex in the history of the United Nations".

That is what Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said today in Paris, while attending the resumed meeting on Cambodia. He also said in his

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statement that in Cambodia, as elsewhere, the effectiveness and success of United Nations intervention were closely dependent on the full and complete cooperation of all the parties involved. Achieving peace was an ongoing battle, he said, adding that this was an "historic opportunity to win the battle for South-East Asia".

Earlier today, he witnessed the signing of the Cambodia Agreements -- a peace treaty to end the 13-year conflict and prepare the country for elections.

The Security Council decided on 16 October to establish a United Nations advance mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) to assist in maintaining the present cease-fire, in preparation for a proposed United Nations Transitional Authority in that country. The Mission is expected to be fully deployed between mid-November and mid-December.

Also today, the Secretary-General met with his advisors on Cambodia, headed by Rafeeuddin Ahmed, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs in South-East Asia and Marrack Goulding, Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs.

He then met with Nguyen Manh Can, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, with whom he discussed the United Nations future role in Cambodia. He also met with Budimir Loncar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia, with whom he discussed the situation in that country.

Later, the Secretary-General was guest to a luncheon in honour of heads of delegations at the Cambodia conference which was attended by the Foreign Ministers of the Permanent Members of the Security Council - with the exception of the United Kingdom.

Yesterday, 22 October, the Secretary-General paid a courtesy visit to Prince Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, Chairman of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia.

The Secretary-General is expected back in New York tomorrow.

The Security Council held informal consultations today to hear a report by the Chairman of the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament, Rolf Ekeus, on inspections of Iraqi weapons sites undertaken by the Commission.

Following consultations, Mr. Ekeus told correspondents that he had given the Council a detailed report on talks held in Baghdad with Iraqi authorities and on what future problems the Commission might expect.

Also speaking to correspondents, the United Kingdom's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Sir David Hannay, said Mr. Ekeus had explained to the Council the particular problem that Iraq could ask for exceptions to be made under a certain provision of resolution 687 (1991). That provision would allow Iraq to keep the buildings and equipment,

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previously designed for the conduct of programmes for weapons of mass destruction, under the condition that Iraq convince the IAEA and the Special Commission that the purpose in the future use of such buildings was a genuinely civil purpose. Mr. Ekeus had stressed that there would have to be a very careful monitoring of the particular sites to ensure that they were not reversed into their earlier illicit use.

In a message sent on the occasion of United Nations Day, which is celebrated tomorrow, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar has appealed to the leaders of peoples "to ensure that freedoms recently gained and energies newly released are devoted to ends most conducive to human welfare".

The Secretary-General further noted that the role of the United Nations was no longer peripheral and its purpose no longer questioned. In his opinion, the Organization had become the rallying point for the effort to establish a new order of peace and justice that would promote human rights and eradicate poverty and other social plague.

In a separate message, the President of the General Assembly Samir S. Shihabi of Saudi Arabia, said that "it would be difficult to envisage what the world scene would look like today if the United Nations were not in existence and active in many diverse ways". He went on stating that "only the United Nations can contribute effectively to the solution of the global challenges", among which he listed arms race, poverty, regional conflicts and underdevelopment.

The new climate of cooperation prevailing today in the international affairs had resulted in an ever-increasing demand by the public and the media world-wide for the products and services offered by the Department of Public Information (DPI). This was the assessment made by Under-Secretary-General for Public Information Thérèse Paquet-Sévigny, who reviewed the work of DPI over the past year, as the Special Political Committee began consideration of questions relating to information.

Mrs. Sévigny said the Department had used a variety of media to increase visibility and public support concerning such issues as peace-making, peace-keeping, disarmament, human rights, anti-apartheid and economic and social development. She appealed to all Member States to be sensitive to the financial and resource constraints experienced by DPI and expressed her willingness to cooperate with them in addressing those problems.

Opening the general debate on information, the representatives of Pakistan, Ecuador, Brazil, Uruguay and Finland, on behalf of the five Nordic countries, all underlined the importance that their Governments attached to the free flow of information and the freedom of the press.

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Speakers participating in the debate on the exploitation of the environment as a weapon in times of war, have told the General Assembly's Sixth Committee (Legal) that the recent conflict in the Gulf showed the need for a comprehensive legal regime for protection of the environment. Some speakers also stressed the need for all States to accede to and abide by existing international conventions aimed such protection.

Citing the vast environmental damage caused by oil wells set afire in Kuwait by Iraq, the representative of Switzerland, Dieter Chenaux-Repond, said existing conventions for the protection of the environment in times of armed conflict were pointless if their provisions were a "dead letter" when it came the time to enforce them.

Brazil's representative, Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg, said the issue was lack of compliance with existing treaties. He suggested that before initiating any new course of action, States should discuss ideas with the Red Cross and Red Crescent at their conference in Budapest next month.

The General Assembly yesterday recommended that Member States adopt or strengthen legislation protecting their own cultural heritage and continue drawing up, in cooperation with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), systematic inventories of their cultural property both in their territory and abroad.

In adopting the resolution, which was introduced by the representative of Zaire, the Assembly also commended UNESCO for its efforts at reducing the illicit traffic in cultural property and promoting its return to the country of origin.

The representative of Algeria today told the Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) that his country had decided to make a voluntary contribution of \$10 million for the implementation of the Secretary-General's plan for a referendum in Western Sahara.

Most of the speakers today voiced their support for the joint efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to bring about a just and lasting settlement of the conflict in Western Sahara.
